

# Armenian immigrants in Canada and their distribution in Montreal

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## Résumé de l'article

Le processus de l'immigration arménienne au Canada présente, à plusieurs points de vue, des traits semblables à celui des autres groupes ethniques. Les persécutions politiques, les difficultés socio-économiques sont reconnues comme les raisons principales engendrant l'immigration. Néanmoins, il y a une différence notable qui porte sur la pluralité des lieux d'origine. Ceux-ci dépassent en effet la vingtaine. Ceci ne surprend guère pour une nation dont 50% des membres vivent dans la diaspora (les autres 50% résident en Union Soviétique et plus particulièrement dans la R.S.S. Arménienne). La concentration de la population arménienne sur l'île de Montréal se retrouve aussi chez les autres groupes ethniques tels que les Grecs, les Albanais, etc. Les facteurs sociaux, culturels et ethniques qui expliquent cette répartition s'appliquent aussi dans le cas des Arméniens.

## ARMENIAN IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN MONTREAL \*

*par*

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The purpose of this paper is to describe the process of the Armenian immigration to Canada, and examine the distribution of the Armenian community on the island of Montreal where more than two thirds of the Armenian community in Canada resides. It should be pointed out that since 1974 large number of Armenians, notably from Lebanon<sup>1</sup>, have arrived in Montreal. There is no doubt that this latest major phase of Armenian immigration to Montreal has affected the 1972 pattern of distribution described in this paper. However, data on their numbers and locations have been, so far, very difficult to obtain and thus their impact on the Armenian immigration to Canada, and on the distribution of the Armenians in Montreal has been omitted.

The material presented here has been derived from interviews with Armenians who settled in Canada long ago and who became directly involved in organizing and promoting the immigration of Armenians to Canada, from discussions and interviews with more recent Armenian immigrants, from statistical and non-statistical documents made available by the Department of Immigration, from the 1971 Census of Canada — Geography Section, and finally from my own experience as a member of this ethnic group and a participant-observer since 1960.

While many inferences and interpretations in this presentation may be appealing and plausible, no doubt they lack the kind of solid quantitative demonstration that the human ecologist would like to see. However, by providing an introductory note on the Armenian immigration to Canada and their distribution in Montreal, it is hoped that further studies with a more analytical approach will be undertaken.

### ARMENIAN IMMIGRATION TO NORTH AMERICA : THE BEGINNING

Research has shown that a small Armenian colony existed in the state of Virginia as early as the first quarter of the seventeenth century<sup>2</sup>. The

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\* An abridged version of this paper was part of a series of presentations in honour of Dr. Bogdan Zaborski's retirement from the Department of Geography of Concordia University in the spring of 1974. The author wishes to thank the above institution for allowing this paper to be submitted for publication.

beginning of this colony is traced to a handful of Armenians in the service of Captain John Smith, the bulwark and savior of Virginia, and to an entrepreneur, named Edward Driggs, who imported two Armenians from Turkey in an attempt to expedite the manufacture of silk in Virginia<sup>3</sup>. These isolated cases were followed by further Armenian immigration to the United States from Turkey in the mid-eighteen hundreds. This second arrival is credited to the work of American missionaries in Turkey.

Armenian immigration to the United States in large numbers took place in the late 1890's as a result of the Turkish atrocities. United States immigration records indicate that between 1895 and 1899 approximately 71 000 Armenians entered the country. The majority of these settled in the north-eastern section of the United States, especially in the state of Massachusetts within metropolitan Boston and surrounding urban centres.

As of this date there is no substantial evidence to indicate the time and the mode of the first Armenian immigration to Canada. The general consensus<sup>4</sup>, however, seems to be that the first Armenian immigrants to Canada came from the north-eastern sections of the United States. Most likely they were members of the group which came from Turkey to the United States between 1895 and 1899. Canadian immigration statistics indicate that 62 Armenians entered Canada between 1900 and 1901 (table 1). In the absence of official documentation to prove otherwise, the year 1900 could be considered the date of the first Armenian immigration to Canada. According to Mr. Tashjian and others, the first Canadian Armenian colony was located within the area covered by today's Toronto — Hamilton megalopolis. The following three factors may have contributed to the choice of Ontario by these first Armenian immigrants to Canada as their place of destination: first, sponsors from southern Ontario inviting labour from the adjacent parts of the United States; second, the proximity of southern Ontario to the north-eastern United States; third, the absence of language problems (since they had already learned English in the U.S. they must have found it easier to settle in an English speaking area).

#### ARMENIAN IMMIGRATION AND CANADIAN LAW : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

As far as it could be ascertained, there was no specific law which, either directly or indirectly, restricted the immigration of the Armenians to Canada prior to 1930. From 1900 to 1930 approximately 3 100 Armenians entered Canada (table 1 and figure 1). Many of these Armenians were refugees and orphans from Turkey, Greece and other countries of the Middle East.

In 1930 Armenian immigration to Canada was greatly restricted as a result of an immigration law which placed the Armenian ethnic group under the classification of *Asiatic Race*<sup>5</sup>. According to this law an applicant, classified as an Asiatic, could enter Canada only if he, or she, possessed one of the following qualifications :

- a) The applicant had to be 18 years old, or less, and be the son, or the daughter, of parents (parent) residing in Canada and being Canadian citizens.

Table 1

*Armenian immigration to Canada \*, 1900-1966 \*\**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
1900-1	62	1922	43	1944	—
1901-2	112	1923	404	1945	3
1902-3	113	1924	338	1946	11
1903-4	81	1925	152	1947	8
1904-5	78	1926	66	1948	10
1905-6	82	1927	55	1949	7
1906-7	208	1928	11	1950	35
1907-8	565	1929	16	1951	80
1908	111	1930	27	1952	71
1909	76	1931	5	1953	70
1910	20	1932	1	1954	76
1911	44	1933	7	1955	144
1912	109	1934	—	1956	189
1913	137	1935	3	1957	285
1914	57	1936	5	1958	197
1915	—	1937	4	1959	242
1916	3	1938	4	1960	164
1917	2	1939	2	1961	186
1918	—	1940	3	1962	777
1919	7	1941	—	1963	932
1920	50	1942	1	1964	855
1921	79	1943	—	1965	887
				1966	1147

\* Compiled from *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Queen's Printer, vol. 4 (The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups), pp. 238-245, and from *Immigration Canada*, 1946 to 1966 (individual issues), Ottawa, Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

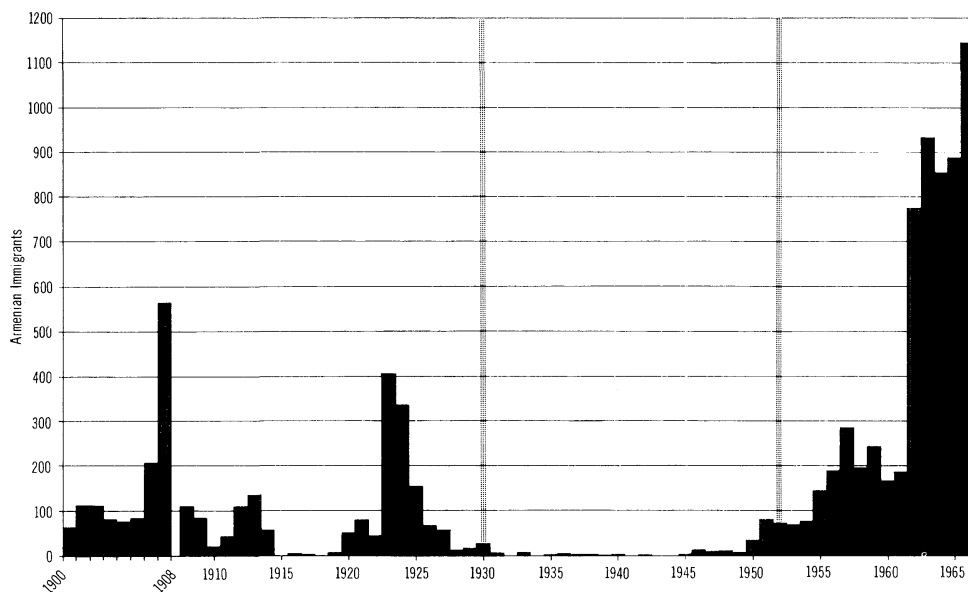
\*\* Since 1966 the Department of Immigration has abolished the « ethnic origin » classification of immigrants. Consequently, it is impossible to determine, with a reasonable accuracy, the number of Armenian immigrants since 1966. Armenian religious, or cultural, institutions do not keep such records.

b) The applicant had to be the wife, or husband of a Canadian citizen residing in Canada.

The effect of this law was obvious, and with the concurrence of WWII, it brought Armenian immigration to Canada almost to nil. According to official immigration statistics approximately 190 Armenians entered Canada between 1931 and 1951. Of this total 115 alone came from 1950 to 1951 leaving an average of 4 persons per year from 1931 to 1949 (table 1). The few Armenians who entered Canada between 1931 and 1949 most likely were granted permission on humanitarian grounds. The arrival of 115 Armenians between 1950 and 1951 may be attributed to the fact that on November 8, 1949, the Hon. Colin Gibson, then Minister of Immigration, made a considerable relaxation of the immigration regulations (concerning the Armenians) on humanitarian grounds <sup>6</sup>.

Figure 1

## ARMENIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA, 1900-1966



The third period of Armenian immigration to Canada commences with the parliamentary approval of a special immigration law on July 4, 1952<sup>7</sup>. According to this law the Armenian ethnic group ceased to be classified under the *Asiatic Race*. This change in classification was the result of the continuing effort of the Canadian Armenian Congress. The latter was formed on April 3, 1948, having the following as its primary objectives :

- a) To bring five hundred displaced Armenians from Europe.
- b) To induce the Canadian Government to remove the Armenian race from the Asiatic classification<sup>8</sup>.

While the first objective did not materialize until the mid-1950's, the second objective was fulfilled in 1952. The realization of the first objective meant that Armenians residing in Canada could act as sponsors not only for their spouses and children, but also for parents, brothers, and sisters.

Taking into consideration that the Canadian Armenian Congress was not granted sponsorship powers, and the fact that the Armenian community of Canada, then numbering approximately at 2 000, consisted primarily of people (refugees and orphans) who were unlikely to have close relatives abroad, the above relaxation in the immigration regulations could not have had a great impact on the Armenian immigration to Canada. However, between 1952 and 1956 about 550 Armenians came to Canada (table 1). The answer to the obvious question here lies in the efforts of Mr. K. Bedoukian of Montreal<sup>9</sup>. Many Armenians who arrived in Canada in the mid-1950's owe their successful immigration to the special sponsorship efforts<sup>10</sup> of this man.

Between 1956 and 1963 the Canadian Armenian Congress was granted by the Dept. of Immigration the right to act as a sponsor with a renewable quota of 100 families. The granting of such a power, the continuing independent efforts of Mr. Bedoukian, and sponsorship provided by other immigrants, especially those who came in the mid-1950's, greatly facilitated the Armenian immigration to Canada. The latter was further enhanced by the abolishment of restrictions on quotas in 1964. As immigration laws became more liberal and were based primarily on the sponsorship and merit systems, the functions performed by the Canadian Armenian Congress diminished. This organization was finally dissolved in 1968.

#### ARMENIAN IMMIGRATION : NUMBERS, PLACE OF ORIGIN, AND REGIONAL PREFERENCE

Although figures on total Armenian Immigration to Canada, from 1900 to 1966, are available, it has been impossible, as of to date and for the same period of time, to find official statistics which would show where these immigrants came from. Such a breakdown is possible, however, for the period for 1946 to 1966. According to the statistical year-books of the Dept. of Immigration, 6373 Armenians entered Canada between 1946 to 1966 (table 2). They came from approximately 40 political (states) and geographical (Europe, Africa and South America — excluding listed states) regions. Almost half of this total (2 864 = 45%) came from the U.A.R. (Egypt). Ninety-five percent of the Armenian immigrants from the U.A.R. entered Canada in the mid-1960's. Table 3 shows their proportion of the total Armenian immigration to Canada for those years.

Table 2

*Armenian immigration by country of last permanent residence, 1946-1966 \**

Country	Numbers	%	Country	Numbers	%
U.A.R.	2864	45	India	27	
Turkey	673	11	Argentina	23	
Greece	610	10	Italy	21	
Lebanon	577	9	Switzerland	21	
France	339	5	Australia	19	
Israel	225	3,5	U.S.S.R.	13	
United States	206	3	Netherlands	12	6%
United Kingdom	184	3	Africa (non-British not elsewhere stated)	25	
Syria	148	2	Asia (not elsewhere stated)	126	
Germany	65	1	Other countries (not elsewhere stated)	72	
Iran	50	1	South America (not elsewhere stated)	43	
Brazil	30	0,5			

\* Compiled from *Immigration Canada, 1946 to 1966* (individual issues), Ottawa, Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Table 3

*Armenian immigration from the U.A.R., 1962-1966 \**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>U.A.R.</i>	<i>%</i>
1962	777	606	78
1963	932	594	64
1964	855	620	72
1955	887	407	46
1966	1147	498	44
Total	4598	2725	59

\* Compiled from *Immigration Canada, 1962-66* (individual issues), Ottawa, Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

The emigration of large numbers of Armenians from the U.A.R. and their immigration to Canada is attributed to the following two factors : first, the large scale nationalization schemes implemented by Nasser in 1961 ; second, the relaxation of immigration laws concerning the countries of the Middle East.

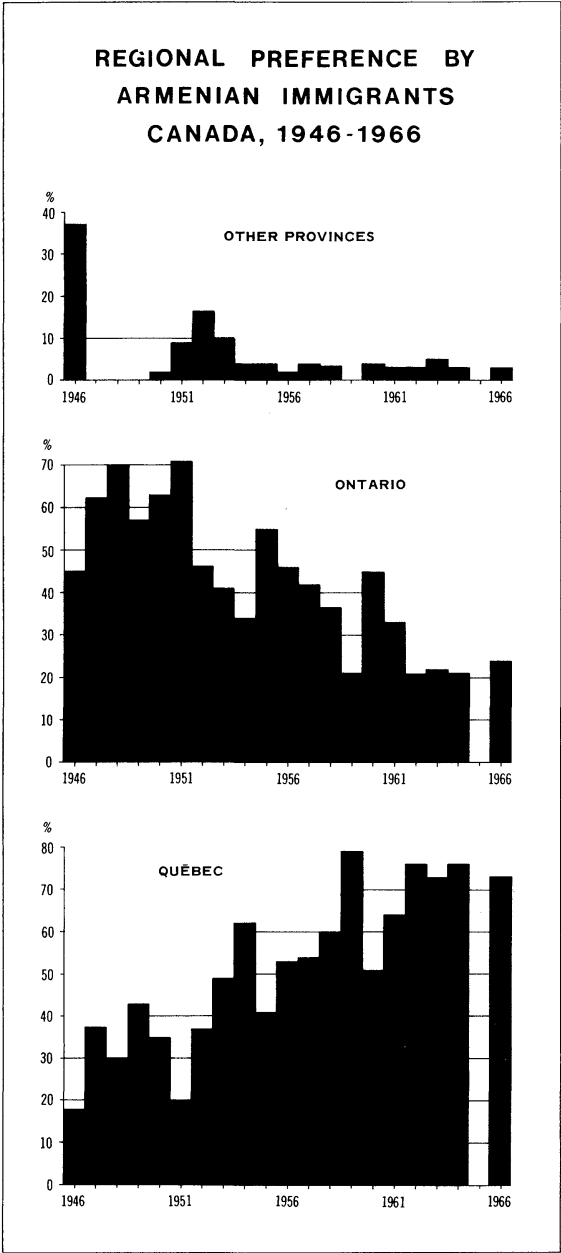
Turkey, Greece, and Lebanon have been the other major contributors to Armenian immigration to Canada. The latter three states together with the U.A.R. have contributed three fourths to the total Armenian immigration to Canada between 1946-66 (table 2).

According to official statistics, the provinces of Ontario and Quebec have been the most preferred by Armenian immigrants (table 4). With the exception of 1946 these two provinces have absorbed almost all of the Armenian Immigration to Canada.

Until 1952 Ontario was the more popular of the two. The trend, however, has changed since 1952 in favour of Quebec (figure 2). It is difficult to point to a single reason for this change. It seems, however, that a number of sponsors from Montreal, notably Mr. K. Bedoukian, undertook the sponsorship of many Armenians from South-eastern Europe (mainly Greece), who eventually became sponsors themselves and so on. The psychological and economic implications of the location of the sponsor(s) may partly account for the above change in the trend. Furthermore, it seems reasonable that though many more Armenians resided in Ontario than in Quebec (till 1952), their being mainly refugees and orphans restricted them from acting as sponsors for close relatives such as husbands, wives and children.

At the time of this survey it was estimated that there were about 20 000 Armenians residing in Canada ; approximately 12 000 within metropolitan Montreal, 7 000 within the Toronto-Hamilton megalopolis, and the remainder were distributed in urban centres such as Ottawa (200), Vancouver (100), etc <sup>11</sup>. At present the total number of Armenians in Canada is estimated to be slightly over 25 000.

Figure 2



THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARMENIANS IN MONTREAL

The purpose of attempting to map the distribution of the Armenians on the island of Montreal is to show a) the pattern of their distribution, and b) to provide a basis for future inquiries in locational analysis with reference to this group.



Table 4

*Armenian immigration to Canada, 1946-1966, by province of destination \**

Year	Quebec %	Ontario %	Q. & O.	Others
1946	18,0	45,0	63,0	37,0
1947	37,5	62,5	100,0	0,0
1948	30,0	70,0	100,0	0,0
1949	43,0	57,0	100,0	0,0
1950	35,0	63,0	98,0	2,0
1951	20,0	71,0	91,0	9,0
1952	37,0	46,5	83,5	16,5
1953	49,0	41,0	90,0	10,0
1954	62,0	34,0	96,0	4,0
1955	41,0	55,0	96,0	4,0
1956	53,0	46,0	98,0	2,0
1957	54,0	42,0	96,0	4,0
1958	60,0	36,5	96,5	3,5
1959	79,0	21,0	100,0	0,0
1960	51,0	45,0	96,0	4,0
1961	64,0	33,0	97,0	3,0
1962	76,0	21,0	97,0	3,0
1963	73,0	22,0	95,0	5,0
1964	76,0	21,0	97,0	3,0
1965	**n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
1966	73,0	24,0	97,0	3,0

\* Compiled from *Immigration Canada, 1946-66* (individual issues and special compilations by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship), Ottawa.

\*\* n.d. = no data.

The method employed in this attempt may be termed «ethnotelephonic<sup>12</sup>». The telephone directory of the Armenian community, based mainly on the telephone directory of Metropolitan Montreal and modified by the author, constituted the source on the numbers and locations of Armenian households<sup>13</sup>; the census tract was taken as the basic areal unit; and finally, the placing of each household in a given census tract was made possible by the availability of the *street index*, for the island of Montreal, published by Statistics Canada<sup>14</sup>.

The results of this cartographic exercise show (figure 3) that the distribution of the Armenian community on the island of Montreal exhibits a pattern of concentration. It is apparent that more than 60% of the Armanians reside in a corridor-shaped area. This general area is composed of four subsections; the western section of the city of Outremont, the area known as *Park Extension*, the area known as *Place St. Laurent* (the western part of Ville St. Laurent bordering on L'Acadie Blvd.), and the area known as *New Bordeau*. It is noteworthy, that the above are not official (legal) subdivisions of metro-Montreal, but rather popular expressions referring to certain districts within existing municipalities.

The distribution of the Armenians, exhibiting a pattern of concentration, has been also supported by the results obtained from comparing the distribution of the Armenians to the distribution of the total population of the island of Montreal (figure 4). It is clear that the ethnic (Armenian) corridor records L.Q. (location quotient) \* scores well above one. The latter meaning an equal representation of two distributions in a given area. It is also apparent that other areas of relative concentration of Armenians are to be found adjacent, and mainly west of the above ethnic corridor. The lack of Armenian concentration in areas east of the St. Lawrence Blvd., on the whole, is very evident. Whether this is due to cultural or socio-economic reasons needs to be determined <sup>15</sup>.

$$* L_Q = \frac{X_i (\% \text{ of Montreal's Armenian popul. in } i\text{'th area} - \text{census tract})}{Y_i (\% \text{ of Montreal's popul.} - \text{incl. the Armenians} - \text{in } i\text{'th area (census tract)})}$$

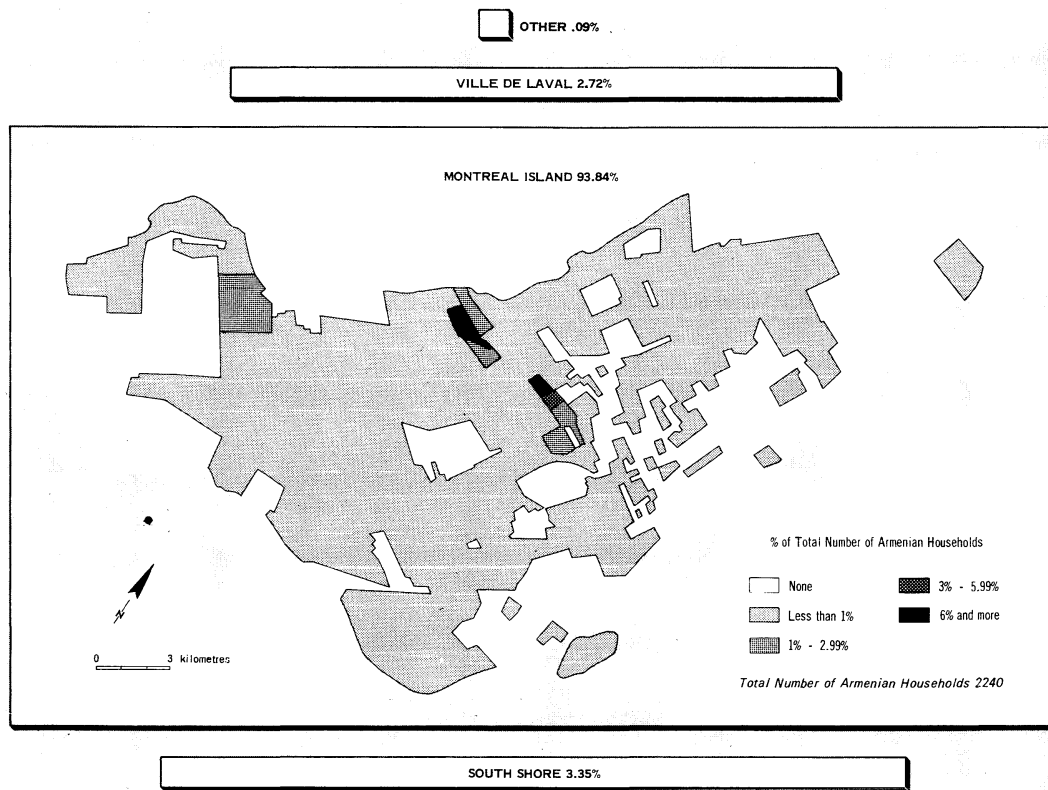
The grouping of the majority (60%) of the Armenians in a small area (app. 1.5 sq. miles), as well as having many areas of Armenian concentration contiguous to the ethnic corridor, is not accidental. Like many other ethnic groups, the Armenians feel strongly about the preservation of their ethnic group, language, culture, traditions, etc. They tend to be in-group oriented and that is evident in their social attitudes and behaviour. For example, there is still a fairly noticeable dislike towards exogamy; the majority of their friends consist of Armenians; and they subscribe to Armenian clubs and associations (appendix I) and support their activities. Such attitudes and behaviour are stronger amongst the elderly and the middle-aged than amongst the youth. Unfortunately, the obvious lack of sociological research in this field does not allow us at this time to make any valid statements or predictions with reference to trends and the future <sup>16</sup>.

At this point, it does not seem unreasonable to hypothesize that the realization of the above (ethnic preservation, language, etc.) could meet with greater success in a rather small area where larger number of members of the same group reside. In an attempt, 1971, to see whether the desire to live near to other Armenians was important, a 5% randomly chosen sample from the list of the Armenian households (telephone directory) was interviewed. They were given five variables (proximity to other Armenians, to transportation and shopping facilities, cost of rent, and others) and were asked to rank them in order of importance, as far as the influence of the above variables on their decision where to reside (choice of location of residence) was concerned. They were also asked to rank them twice, once for the time of their arrival (first residence) and once for the time of their last change of residence. The results of this survey are summarized in table 5.

The desire to be near to other Armenians appears to have been the most significant independent variable affecting the choice of the location of Armenian residences. Though this variable has lost in the degree of its importance, from period one (choice of location at the time of arrival) to period two (choice of location in the last change of residence), nevertheless it ranks first for both periods. Furthermore, it is evident that the decline of its importance has not been significant, for the percentage, indicating the cumulative picture at the second level of ranking are almost identical (table 5).

Figure 3

# PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ARMENIAN HOUSEHOLDS ON MONTREAL ISLAND 1972



## OTHER

SAINTE-ADÈLE	.045%
SAINTE-AGATHE	.045%

## VILLE DE LAVAL

CHOMEDEY	2.05%
LAVAL-DES-RAPIDES	.36%
DUVERNAY	.19%
SAINTE-DOROTHÉE	.04%
SAINTE-ROSE	.04%
VIMONT	.04%

## SOUTH SHORE

BROSSARD	1.43%
LONGUEUIL	.50%
CHÂTEAUGUAY	.36%
GREENFIELD PARK	.27%
BOUCHERVILLE	.22%
SAINT-LAMBERT	.19%
LEMOYNE	.13%
LAFLÈCHE	.09%
CANDIAC	.04%
SAINT-BRUNO	.04%
SAINT-HUBERT	.04%
SAINT-JEAN	.04%

Figure 4

# **RELATIVE CONCENTRATION OF ARMENIAN HOUSEHOLDS ON MONTREAL ISLAND, 1972**



From an historical perspective, the eastern section of the city of Outremont (especially Hutchison, de L'Epe, Duroche, Querbes, and Bloomfield streets between Bernard and Van Horne streets), and the adjacent areas of the city of Montreal — Park Avenue and Jeanne Mance street — may be considered the core area in the distribution of the Armenian community on the island of Montreal. It was in this general area that an Armenian community of approximately 1 000 emerged in the second half of the 1950's. The overwhelming majority of the Armenian immigrants residing in this core had come from Greece under the sponsorship of Mr. Bedoukian. As shown in table 6, Armenian immigration from Greece constituted one-fourth to one-third of the total Armenian immigration to Canada.

Several factors may have contributed to the choice of the above general area by the Armenians from Greece as their destination. First, the location of their sponsor who provided, for many, their work, shelter, and guidance. Mr. Bedoukian's business (Ararat Rug) was (still is) located near the corner of Sherbrooke street and Park Avenue. This meant proximity (approximately 3 miles) between sponsor and immigrant. Second, since many of the first arrivals resided in the above area and later became sponsors themselves, subsequent immigration chose to reside near their sponsors for obvious reasons. Third, the construction of the Sourp Hagop church at the corner of Park Avenue and St. Zotique street. Located only a ten to fifteen minutes walking distance from the core area, it became the center of Armenian social activities. Fourth, since the above general area was (still is) also populated

Table 5

*The ethnic factor in the choice of the location of residence \**  
*The case of Armenians*  
*by rank and cumulative percent*

Variables	Rank 1		Rank 2		Rank 3		Rank 4		Rank 5	
	P-1	P-2	P-1	P-2	P-1	P-2	P-1	P-2	P-1	P-2
V-1	48	39	68	65	81	79	91	90	100	100
V-2	18	22	41	41	56	60	85	84	100	100
V-3	18	16	43	40	78	73	94	93	100	100
V-4	6	10	26	24	56	48	92	83	100	100
V-5	10	13	22	30	29	38	37	48	100	100

\* Results based on a survey conducted by the author in the spring of 1971.

**Key**

- V-1 Proximity to other Armenians
- V-2 Proximity to work
- V-3 Proximity to transportation and shopping facilities
- V-4 Rental costs
- V-5 Other
- P-1 Period 1 (choice at the time of arrival)
- P-2 Period 2 (choice at the time of last change of residence)

Table 6

*Armenian immigration from Greece, 1952-1959 \**

<i>Year</i>	<i>% of Total Armenian Immigration</i>
1952	43
1953	—
1954	47
1955	27
1956	28
1957	26
1958	16
1959	34

\* Compiled from *Immigration Canada* (individual issues), Ottawa, Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

by many Greeks, and since the majority of the Armenian immigrants arriving in Montreal came from Greece, this area had obvious advantages. Fifth, rents in this area were not very high and the newcomer with a small income could cope with it. Sixth, there were a multitude of services in this area some of which were owned by Greeks and Armenians, while others employed members of these two ethnic groups. This greatly facilitated basic everyday economic transactions.

Chronologically, Park Extension was the next area where the Armenian community expanded. This expansion took place in the early and mid-1960's when extensive housing developments (4 to 16 unit apartment buildings) were completed. The Armenians, who came to reside in Park Extension, were not a segment of the Outremont-Park Avenue group who, because of improved socio-economic conditions, desired to leave the older and « poorer » core. The overwhelming majority of the Armenians of the Park Extension area came from Egypt mainly as a result of socio-economic pressures triggered by Arab nationalism under Nasser. These Armenian immigrants from Egypt had certain advantages over the Armenians from Greece, which made it possible for them to choose not to reside within the core. First, compared to the Armenians from Greece, they were, on the whole, better educated with knowledge of either the French or the English language, and very often both<sup>17</sup>. Second, many of them were economically better off in Egypt than the Armenians of the core when the latter were residing in Greece. Thus, it seems reasonable to say that they (the Armenians from Egypt) did not really feel the need of the core. The expansion of the Armenian community in the Park Extension area was further strengthened by subsequent arrivals from Egypt as the first wave started eventually acting as a sponsor for relatives and friends.

At this point it may be appropriate to ask why Park Extension and not somewhere else? After all, there must have been other areas in Montreal

better than the Outremont-Park Avenue area and comparable to Park Extension. Taking into consideration the fact that the Armenian society has been basically in-group oriented, it seems logical that certain locations would be more advantageous than others in facilitating such a social behaviour. The proximity of Park Extension to the Sourp Hagop church and to the core may have played an important role in their decision to establish residence in Park Extension. The church and associated organizations gave frequent opportunities for an Armenian to Armenian social contact.

Although the above discussion has centered around the Armenian immigrants from Egypt and Greece, there were also a number of Armenians, notably from Turkey (in late 1950's) and Lebanon (in the 1960's), who settled in both the core and Park Extension.

The presence of large numbers of Armenians in the Place St. Laurent and New Bordeaux areas is probably due mainly to the combination of the following two factors :

- a) Movement in suburban types of neighbourhoods characterized by high rises and « duplex » apartment units.
- b) Proximity to the new location of Sourp Hagop church and Armenian Center, near to and west of the intersection of James Morrice and Dudemaine streets.

Expansion into these two areas took place in the second half of the 1960's and the process is slowly continuing at the present <sup>18</sup>.

The presence of a considerable number of Armenians in Chomedey (Laval), South Shore, and Dollard des Ormeaux is attributed to a move towards private single family house ownership.

In conclusion, this preliminary survey has identified the main stages in the Armenian immigration to Canada, and has shown the pattern of the distribution on the island of Montreal. The examination of both phenomena suggests that the immigration, and distribution of the Armenians in the metropolises of Canada, may not vary significantly from those of other ethnic groups.

In both cases, the collection of pertinent information has proven to be difficult and inadequate. Census data has been inconsistent and incomplete. For example, the abolition of the classification of immigrants by « ethnic origin » in 1966 by the Dept. of Manpower and Immigration presents a serious impediment in the study of ethnic minorities such as the Armenians <sup>19</sup>. As a consequence, a great deal of the required information had to be supplemented by the results obtained from sampling, interviewing, and personal observation methods. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the presence of such inadequacies and difficulties shall not discourage further attempts at examining the Armenian community of Canada on whom very little research has been done. Such studies can only enhance our understanding of Canada's ethnic mosaic.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Armenian community of Lebanon has been estimated to about 200 000. This is the largest singlemost Armenian community outside the communist block.

<sup>2</sup> One of the earliest inquiries into the question of Armenian immigration to America is that by M.V. Malcom (1919), *The Armenians in America* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press). Also, a later addition by J.H. Tashjian (1947), *The Armenians in the United States and Canada* (Boston: Armenian Youth Federation).

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> A recent note, in a collection of information sheets issued on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the genocide of the Armenians, points out to the possibility of Armenian immigration to Canada at about 1880 as workers for the Canadian Pacific Railway. A visit to the CP archives in Montreal proved to be of little help. Pending further investigation into this matter no definite statement is made. See United Committee of Canada for the 60th Anniversary of the Genocide of the Armenians (1974), *A Brochure of Information Sheets. Specifically the Sheet on — Armenians in Canada* (Montreal). Copies may be obtained from 3401 rue Olivar-Asselin, Montreal, and 663 Jarry St. West, Montreal.

<sup>5</sup> *The Canadian Armenian Congress*. A 1952 bulletin to the Armenian community of Canada. Made available to me by Mr. Y. Pastermajian, president of the Canadian Armenian Congress till its dissolution in 1968.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> *Department of Citizenship and Immigration* (1952). Immigration Policy on Persons Admissible Under P.C. 2856 and P.C. 2115 (Ottawa: *Immigration Canada*). Document made available to me by Mr. Y. Postermajian, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> *The Canadian Armenian Congress, op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> A businessman and a member of the Canadian Armenian Congress who immigrated to Canada after the Second World War. He has been deeply involved, both at the personal and collective levels, in facilitating Armenian immigration to Canada.

<sup>10</sup> Due to restrictions on the scale of sponsorship, persons wishing to immigrate to Canada applied to Mr. Bedoukian. He, in turn, notified the Canadian Council of Churches who investigated the needs of the potential candidate through the services of the Red Cross. Upon a positive decision both Mr. Bedoukian and the potential immigrant were notified by the Department of Immigration. Mr. Bedoukian undertook (by agreement) to pay two thirds of the immigrants' transportation fee, as well as fulfill certain sponsorship duties such as to assist the immigrant in finding a job.

<sup>11</sup> The figure 20 000, as well as its breakdown, was an estimate proposed by several Armenian organizations and it referred to the year 1973. In an attempt to examine the validity of this figure (20 000) the author applied a crude method for estimating which assumed 1) a base of 100 Armenians in 1899 (based on insufficient notes on Armenian immigration to Canada already pointed out in the text); 2) a 2% natural increase (based on Armenian population studies mainly from the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian S.S.R.); 3) an average immigration of 500 Armenians per year between January 1967 and December 1972 (immigration figures from 1900 to 1966 were available). On the basis of the above the formula for any year was as follows:

$$\text{popul. end of year} = 1.02 (\text{popul. beginning of year}) \\ \text{immigration during the year.}$$

The successive application of this formula gave a total of 20 090. Note that emigration and repatriation as factors have not been considered. It has been estimated, however, that they have been insignificant. At present, the Armenian population of Canada should exceed the 25,000 mark. Noteworthy, that only during 1976 and 1977 approximately 3 — 4000 Armenian from Lebanon immigrated to Canada (church estimates), as a result of the political disorder in that country.

<sup>12</sup> Each year the Armenian community of Montreal compiles a list of the Armenians residing in metro-Montreal. This list is based on information provided by the telephone directory for metro-Montreal. Armenian names due to their distinct endings (*ian*) can be easily distinguished. A small deviation from this rule does exist but not large enough to create overall distortions. The problem is further reduced if the person(s) who is (are) involved with the compilation is (are) Armenian(s). In our case all persons involved qualified the above criterion. The map (figure 2) included in this paper was constructed in



June 1973 on the basis of the 1972-73 telephone directory of the Armenian community which was modified slightly by the author.

<sup>13</sup> Although more accurate data is now possible through statistics Canada, cost of computer time has restricted its availability.

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada, Census of Canada (1971). *Street Index, Montreal — Part I* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Geography Section).

<sup>15</sup> A large number of Armenians, probably more than 50%, possess a knowledge of the French language. This is particularly true for Armenians who emigrated from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and obviously from France.

<sup>16</sup> Mr. Bedoukian (the same person referred to previously) has recently (February 1975) conducted a small scale research amongst Armenian youth from Turkey. His results indicate that almost all of them associate with Armenian friends exclusively. In addition Mr. Bedoukian has looked at the distribution of mixed marriages amongst Armenians in 1974. The distribution was almost even between mixed and Armenian to Armenian marriages. This is a very high ratio but since it refers only to 1974 it cannot be taken as an indicator of a trend.

<sup>17</sup> Due to the presence of an English administration, French missionaries, and private schools for a considerable length of time, students were exposed to both of these languages. Their use in everyday economic transactions provided an opportunity for practical learning. It also seems to be the general consensus amongst Armenians from Egypt that knowledge of French and English was associated with some social prestige (status).

<sup>18</sup> The socio-ethnic factor, rather than the economic seems to be playing an important role in the residential relocation of the Armenians in the Montreal region. Further research on this matter, to be undertaken shortly, will clarify this question.

<sup>19</sup> This situation will be corrected by the 1976 Census of Canada where the « Armenian » mother tongue has been identified separately for the first time on the census data base. This data had not been released at the time of writing this paper.

## APPENDIX I

### ARMENIAN CHURCHES \*

1. Sourp Hagop, Armenian Apostolic Church (Armenian Orthodox).
2. St. Gregory the Illuminator, Armenian Apostolic Church (Armenian Orthodox).
3. N.D. De Nareg, Armenian Catholic Church.
4. Armenian Evangelical Church.

### ARMENIAN ORGANIZATIONS

1. Armenian Revolutionary Federation (political party).
2. Armenian Democratic League (political party).
3. Armenian General Benevolent Union.
4. Armenian Relief Society.
5. « Hamazkain » Armenian Cultural Association.
6. « Homenetmen — Gamk » Armenian General Sports Association.
7. « Levon Shant » Armenian Youth Federation.
8. Mamigonian Cultural Association.
9. M.E.G. (Organe Central de Culture).
10. Société Arménienne D'Istanbul.
11. « Tekeyan » Armenian Cultural Association.

\* Over 95% of the Armenians subscribe to the christian faith. The overwhelming majority of these (over 95%) belong to the Armenian Orthodox Church.

## RÉSUMÉ

**CHICHEKIAN, Garo : L'immigration arménienne au Canada et sa répartition sur l'île de Montréal**

Le processus de l'immigration arménienne au Canada présente, à plusieurs points de vue, des traits semblables à celui des autres groupes ethniques. Les persécutions politiques, les difficultés socio-économiques sont reconnues comme les raisons principales engendrant l'immigration. Néanmoins, il y a une différence notable qui porte sur la pluralité des lieux d'origine. Ceux-ci dépassent en effet la vingtaine. Ceci ne surprend guère pour une nation dont 50% des membres vivent dans la diaspora (les autres 50% résident en Union Soviétique et plus particulièrement dans la R.S.S. Arménienne). La concentration de la population arménienne sur l'île de Montréal se retrouve aussi chez les autres groupes ethniques tels que les Grecs, les Albanais, etc. Les facteurs sociaux, culturels et ethniques qui expliquent cette répartition s'appliquent aussi dans le cas des Arméniens.

**MOTS CLÉS : Arméniens, Immigration, Montréal, Canada.**

## ABSTRACT

**CHICHEKIAN, Garo : Armenian Immigrants in Canada and their Distribution in Montreal**

In many respects the characteristics of the process of Armenian immigration to Canada have not been significantly different from that of other ethnic groups. Political persecutions, and socio-economic stresses are identified as the main reasons for Armenian emigration. One noticeable difference, however, is present. It pertains to the number of places of origin which exceeds twenty. This is expected for a nation with 50% of its members living in diaphora (the other 50% resides in the Soviet Union, and specifically within the Armenian S.S.R.). The pattern of distribution, on the island of Montreal showing a definite « concentration », has been also identified in other ethnic studies such as Greeks, Albanians, etc. Social, cultural, and ethnic factors attempting to explain such patterns of concentration are applicable in the case of the Armenians.

**KEY WORDS : Armenians, Immigration, Montréal, Canada.**